

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SSM-03 ACDA-07 /080 W
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R 010635Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4194
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 2620

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PLO LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE FRONT DENOUNCES CAIRO ACCORD

1. SUMMARY: AS IT HAS REPEATEDLY THREATENED TO DO, KFUR FRONT MAY 28 FORMALLY DENOUNCED CAIRO ACCORD ON PALESTINIAN STATUS IN LEBANON. GOVERNMENT HAS RESPONDED BY LOW-KEY AFFIRMATION OF ITS BELIEF THAT ACCORD IS BEST IMPLEMENTED THROUGH POLITICAL MEANS, AND OVER TIME. FRONT MAY HAVE BROUGHT ITSELF CLOSER TO OPEN BREAK WITH GOVERNMENT AND WITH SYRIA. ON THE OTHER HAND, ITS "DENUNCIATION" MIGHT BE PLOY TO BRING MUSLIMS AROUND TO SUPPORT GOL INTERPRETATION OF CAIRO ACCORD. END SUMMARY.

2. KFSR FRONT DECLARATION. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF COMPLETE TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY "DIRECTORATE" OF LEBANESE FRONT ES CARRIED IN L'ORIENT-LE JOUR MAY 27:
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BEGIN QUOTE: THE DIRECTORATE OF THE LEBANESE FRONT, HAVING MET IN FULL SESSION AT RESIDENCE OF PRESIDENT CAMILLE CHAMOUN THIS FRIDAY, MAY 27, 1977, AFTER HAVING REVIEWED THE PROBLEMS OF THE HOUR, TURNED ITS ATTENTION TO THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD. (THE FRONT) NOTES THAT EIGHT YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE

THE SIGNATURE OF THIS ACCORD, FOUR YEARS SINCE THE PROCLAMATION OF THE MELKART CONVENTION AND EIGHT MONTHS SINCE THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE SUMMITS OF RIYADH AND CAIRO. IT LIKEWISE NOTES THAT NON-OBSERVATION OF THESE ACCORDS BY THE PALESTINIANS HAS BEEN ONE OF THE PRINCIPLE CAUSES OF THE CATASTROPHE WHICH HAS STRUCK LEBANON AND CONSTITUTES, IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AS WELL AS THE CONCLUSIONS WHICH CAN BE DEDUCED FROM THEM, A PERMANENT THREAT OF CATASTROPHE. AFTER DISCUSSIONS, THE FRONT HAS DECIDED THE FOLLOWING:

1) THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON HAS NEVER BEEN A RIGHT FOR THE PALESTINIANS. IT HAS BEEN A FORM OF ASSISTANCE BY LEBANON IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE MISFORTUNES WHICH THEY HAVE HAD TO ENDURE AFTER 1948.

2) THE CAIRO ACCORD AND ITS ANNEXES SHOULD HAVE GOVERNED THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE. ALL THE DOCUMENTS RECOGNIZE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF LEBANON, OVER ITS TERRITORY AS WELL AS OVER ALL RESIDENTS.

3) GIVEN THE REFUSAL OF THE PALESTINIANS TO APPLY THE PROVISIONS OF THESE ACCORDS, THE CAIRO CONVENTION IS CONSIDERED DENOUNCED AND WITHOUT FURTHER VALUE.

4) HENCEFORTH, THE FRONT CONSIDERS THAT THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON IS ILLEGAL.

5) THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, AFTER THE FAILURE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE, SHOULD INMITE THE COUNCIL OF THE (ARAB) LEAGUE TO MEET TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF THE ILLEGAL PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON. THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE IS NOT A LEBANESE BUT AN ARAB CAUSE. CONSEQUENTLY, ALL THE ARAB COUNTRIES SHOULD HENCEFORTH

SUPPORT, EACH ACCORDING TO ITS CAPACITY, THEIR SHARE OF THIS PRESENCE. END QUOTE.

3. THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDS. PRIME MINISTER HOSS, WHO RARELY SPEAKS FOR THE RECORD ON POLITICAL ISSUES, SAID THE FOLLOWING EARLY MAY 28, ACCORDING TO LJORIENT-LE JOUR MAY 29: "WE CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS THE APPLICATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD, BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IT IS IN THE HIGHER INTEREST OF THE COUNTRY. WE BELIEVE THAT THE LEBANESE INTERPRETATION, APPLIED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE CHIEF OF STATE, IS A FAIR INTERPRETATION. WE HOPE THAT THE APPLICATION WILL BE MADE COMPLETELY, WHICH WILL SAFEGUARD THE INTERESTS OF ALL."

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4. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR MAY 29 OFFERED AN "ANALYSIS,"
ATTRIBUTED TO "RESPONSIBLE PARTIES," WHICH IN EFFECT
APPEARS TO BE THE GOVERNMENT'S "PRESS GUIDANCE" ON THE
MATTER, TEXT AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN QUOTE. A. THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE
LEBANESE FRONT INITIATIVE IS UNDENIABLE, AND MIGHT
PROVOKE AN INTERNAL CONTROVERSY (WITH UNCERTAIN
REPERCUSSIONS) ON THE LEGALITY OF THE PALESTINIAN
PRESENCE IN LEBANON.

B. IT IS EVIDENT THAT, IF THE STATE SUCCEEDS IN
APPLYING THE CAIRO ACCORD, WITH THE PROTECTION OF
LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY WHICH IT SUPPOSES, THE "FRONT" WILL
NO LONGER CONSIDER THIS ACCORD DEFUNCT, SINCE IT (THE
FRONT) DENOUNCED THE ACCORD ONLY BY VIRTUE OF THE
PALESTINIAN REFUSAL TO SUBMIT TO IT.

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C. IN OTHER WORDS, THE STATE IS DETERMINED TO PROCURE THE APPLICATION OF THE ACCORD. HOWEVER, IT BELIEVES THAT PERSUASION, EVEN IF NECESSARILY OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME, WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN COMPULSION, SINCE IT WILL SPARE THE COUNTRY NEW SHOCKS.

D. THE STATE FURTHERMORE HAS A DIRECT INTEREST IN THE APPLICATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD: FROM THE MOMENT THAT FOREIGN RESIDENTS ARE DISARMED, THE VARIOUS LOCAL MILITIAS WILL NO LONGER HAVE A REASON TO EXIST AND WEAPONS WILL BE KEPT ONLY IN THE HANDS OF REGULAR FORCES OF ORDER. THE POLITICAL ASPECT OF THIS OBJECTIVE IS CLEAR TO EVERYONE. THEREFORE, A PLAN BY STAGES OUGHT TO BE FOLLOWED, COVERING THE GENERAL DISARMAMENT, WHICH SHOULD BEGIN LOGICALLY WITH THE PALESTINIANS.

E. IF THESE LATTER CONTINUE TO PLAY AN OBSTRUCTIONIST ROLE (ON THE PRETEXT OF THE MELKART ACCORD, WHICH GAVE THEM THE RIGHT TO MAINTAIN "MILITIA" IN THE CAMPS), THE STATE CAN ALWAYS REFER THE MATTER TO ITS PARTNERS IN THE (ARAB) LEAGUE, BUT WITHOUT APPEARING TO WISH TO FORCE THEIR HAND. END QUOTE.

5. COMMENT: IN THE PAST, VARIOUS KFUR LEADERS HAVE INDIVIDUALLY DENOUNCED THE CAIRO ACCORD ON THE GROUND THAT IT HAD BEEN VIOLATED BY THE PALESTINIANS. IN RECENT WEEKS, CHRISTIAN LEADERS SUCH AS BECHIR GEMAYEL HAVE THREATENED DRAMATIC GESTURES IF THE CAIRO ACCORD IS NOT ENFORCED. THE MAY 27 DECLARATION AMOUNTS TO A KIND OF FORMAL REPUDIATION OF THE ACCORD. IT IS OF COURSE WITHOUT LEGAL EFFECT, SINCE THE FRONT DOES NOT SPEAK FOR THE LEBANESE STATE, NOR WAS IT EVER A PARTY TO THE ACCORD. ITS POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE, HOWEVER, IS CONSIDERABLE.

6. ON THE SURFACE, IT CONSTITUTES A DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIAL

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OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT MAY BE A CAREFULLY DESIGNED PLOY TO ENCOURAGE MODERATE LEBANESE MUSLIMS AND PERHAPS OTHER ARAB STATES TO SUPPORT THE SARKIS INTERPRETATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD. AS LONG AS THE KFUR FRONT SUPPORTED THE ACCORD, THEIR POLITICAL OPPONENTS WERE ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY OPPOSED; KFUR FRONT OPPOSITION MAKES IT POLITICALLY RESPECTABLE FOR CERTAIN LEBANESE POLITICAL GROUPS TO SUPPORT IT. IF THIS WAS THE GAME, AS SOURCES CLOSE TO THE KFUR FRONT HAVE HINTED, IT MAY BE SUCCEEDING; ON MAY 30, AS REPORTED IN L'ORIENT-LE JOUR MAY 31, THE MODERATE ISLAMIC GROUP, LED BY CHAFIC

WAZZAN, TOOK A POSITION MORE SUPPORTIVE OF THE SARKIS POSITION THAN PREVIOUSLY. WAZZAN SAID AFTER MEETING SARKIS: "WE HOPE THAT IN THE NAME OF (ALL THE LEBANESE), (PRESIDENT SARKIS) WILL SUCCEED IN HIS MISSION AND THAT HE WILL BE ABLE, THANKS TO A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING WITH THE CONCERNED PARTIES, TO EXECUTE THE ACCORD CONCLUDED WITH THE PALESTINIANS IN ORDER TO REGULATE THEIR PRESENCE ON LEBANESE SOIL." THE FACT THAT THE KFUR FRONT DECLARATION OF OPPOSITION WAS PRINTED IN FULL IN ALL LEBANESE NEWSPAPERS SUGGESTS THAT SARKIS MAY HAVE BEEN IN ON THE GAME.
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Message Attributes

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